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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 51st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 138: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

(b) RELOCATION OF UKRAINE TO THE GROUP OF MEMBER STATES SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH 3 (c) OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 43/232 (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.32)

1. Mr. ZLENKO (Ukraine) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.32, which provided that, for the apportionment of the expenses of peace-keeping operations, Greece would be gradually reclassified from group C to group B while Ukraine would make a simultaneous gradual transition from group B to group C. He expressed appreciation to Greece, whose voluntary decision to change groups had finally made it possible to correct what the majority of Member States considered an anomaly, namely, the classification of Ukraine in group B while the other Member States from the former Soviet Union had justifiably been placed in group C.

2. He pointed out that the provisions of paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft resolution were similar to those adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 49/249 and that they had no implications for other Member States. If the process referred to in paragraph 2 (b) of the draft resolution was not completed by the year 2000, the remaining difference would be added to Ukraine's contribution to the budget for peace-keeping operations.

3. Ukraine's considerable arrears were a direct consequence of the fact that the Member States had not yet approved its request for reclassification. Ukraine was currently considering ways to settle its arrears. The adoption of the draft resolution would help it to finalize a payment schedule, and could only contribute to the Organization's financial recovery.

4. Mr. KASKARELIS (Greece) said that his country, recognizing the need to give the Organization a solid financial foundation, had voluntarily decided to increase its contribution to peace-keeping operations by asking to be transferred from group C to group B. However, since that change would increase its assessed contribution by 500 per cent, Greece's decision was subject to the condition that the increase should be applied gradually, according to the arrangement set forth in paragraph 2 (a) of the draft resolution.

5. There was no technical reason why Greece should be relocated from group C, which included countries that were more economically powerful than Greece. None the less, following the example set by Spain and Portugal, it had decided to take that initiative both to help the Organization to weather its financial crisis and to facilitate the transfer of Ukraine from group B to group C. It was understood that the dollar amount of Ukraine's contributions would decrease gradually by amounts equal to the increases in Greece's assessments.

6. It was also understood that the decision under consideration would be taken without prejudice to any criteria which the General Assembly might subsequently adopt in order to achieve a more equitable apportionment of the costs of peace-keeping operations.

7. Mrs. ARCHINI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed appreciation to Greece, the third State member of the Union which, by taking the initiative of asking to be transferred from group C to group B, had made it possible for another Member State to be relocated to group C. In that connection, she recalled that the European Union believed that the system for the apportionment of costs must be thoroughly reformed, and that it had made detailed proposals in that regard to the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations.

8. Miss PEÑA (Mexico) requested that, in accordance with established practice, informal consultations should be held on draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.32 so that all delegations could state their views before it was adopted in plenary meeting.

9. Mr. TOYA (Japan) and Mr. JAREMCZUK (Poland) paid tribute to Greece for its initiative and said they were in favour of transferring Ukraine from group B to group C in accordance with the arrangements set forth in the draft resolution.

10. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) said that he welcomed Greece's decision and hoped that, as the representative of Greece had assured the Committee, the condition attached to that decision would not constitute a precedent. His delegation was in favour of relocating Ukraine to group C. With respect to paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, it would be useful if Ukraine would specify how it intended to pay off its arrears.

11. Mr. HO (Singapore), supported by Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia), welcomed Greece's decision and expressed support for the reclassification of Ukraine. He believed, however, that the arrangements set forth in paragraph 2 (b) were not quite the same as a simple relocation to group C. For that reason, he hoped that the Committee would hold informal consultations, as requested by the Mexican representative, to consider the technical aspects of the matter.

12. Mr. GRANT (United States of America) said that his delegation appreciated the action taken by Greece, but believed that it was still urgent to review the system for the apportionment of peace-keeping expenses so that problems would no longer have to be solved piecemeal. It hoped that the efforts of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations would help to correct the flaws in the current scale of assessments, which were to blame for the difficulties encountered in the cases of Ukraine and Belarus. He was pleased to note that the provisions of the draft resolution under consideration had no implications for Member States which were not directly concerned and that they stipulated that the decision in question could be changed once the Member States had adopted a new scale.

13. Mr. ZHANG Wamhai (China) said that he welcomed Greece's decision. With respect to the arrangements set forth in paragraph 2, he wondered how the changes to be made could fail to have implications for the other Member States, since the assessments to be applied to Greece and Ukraine for the apportionment of expenses under the regular budget were different. The Secretariat should clarify that matter in the informal consultations.

14. Mr. MIHAI (Romania) and Mr. BLUKIS (Latvia) applauded Greece's decision and fully endorsed the comments of the representative of the European Union.

15. Mr. VARELA (Chile) also welcomed Greece's decision and expressed support for the relocation of Ukraine to group C. His delegation felt that the scale of assessments for the costs of peace-keeping operations should be institutionalized and, like other delegations, it hoped to obtain additional information on the technical aspects of draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.32.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that informal consultations would be held, as requested by a number of delegations.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

17. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of delegations to the agenda items which the Committee had yet to consider, which concerned the financing of various peace-keeping operations and the use of the support account for such operations.

18. Mrs. ARCHINI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, recalled that in February, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had indicated, at a meeting of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, that the credits allocated to the financing of peace-keeping operations would no longer be used to finance activities under the regular budget. The European Union hoped that the Secretariat would confirm that that practice had been discontinued, and asked the Secretariat to present, either to the Fifth Committee or to the Working Group, revised cash-flow forecasts for the rest of 1996 concerning both the regular budget and peace-keeping operations.

19. Mr. JAREMCZUK (Poland) said that a press agency had published information to the effect that the Secretary-General was about to submit a report in which he proposed to abolish some 1,000 Secretariat posts. His delegation would like more details on the matter.

20. The CHAIRMAN said that the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management would provide the desired clarification at the meeting to be held on Tuesday, 2 April.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.